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S E R M O N

Preached before the
Incorporated S O C I E T Y
F O R T H E
*Propagation of the Gospel
in Foreign Parts;*

A T T H E I R
A N N I V E R S A R Y M E E T I N G
I N T H E
Parish-Church of St. M A R Y - L E - B O W,
O n F R I D A Y, *Febr*uary 20. 1740-1.

Preacher
By *THOMAS* Lord Bishop of Oxford.

L O N D O N:
Printed for J. and H. P E M B E R T O N, at the *Golden*
Buck against St. *Dunstan's* Church in *Fleetstreet*.

M D C C X L I.

*At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society
for the Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts, in the Vestry-Room of
St. Mary-le-Bow, on Friday the 20th
Day of February, 1740-1.*

A Greed, That the Thanks of the
SOCIETY be given to the Right
Reverend the Lord Bishop of *Oxford*, for
his Sermon preached this Day before the
SOCIETY; and that his Lordship be de-
fired to Print the same.

Philip Bearcroft Secretary.



M A R K VI. 34.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people; and was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

THIS Passage of the Evangelist expresses, in so strong and engaging a manner, the benevolent Temper of our blessed Lord, and his tender Regard to the spiritual Wants of Men, that it cannot fail of exciting the same Disposition in Us: especially if we consider, that the View, which he is here described to have had, of their destitute Condition, not only induced him *to teach them Himself many things concerning the Kingdom of God*;^a but caused that most serious Reflexion and Exhortation, *The Harvest truly is plenteous, but the Labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest*:^b immediately after which, He sent forth *his twelve Disciples* to preach the Gospel;^c as he did the *Seventy* at another time, on the very same Motive, mentioned by another Evangelist in the very same

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Words:

^a Luk. ix. 11.^b Matth. ix. 36—38.^c Matth. x. 1.

Words: ^d thus opening the Way, by his previous Care of *the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*, ^e for uniting us all into *one Fold under one Shepherd*. ^f

To carry on the great Work which he began, of directing Mankind to present and future Happiness, is the End of this Society: incorporated by a Prince, to whom Religion and Liberty will have eternal Obligations; and established, first for the Support of Christianity in our Colonies and Factories abroad, then for the Propagation of it amongst the Heathens intermixed with them, and bordering upon them; but taking its Name from the remoter and more extensive Part of the Design.

Every possible Reason required our Predecessors in this excellent Undertaking to begin with inspecting the State of the *English Plantations in America*. And nothing could be more applicable to them on that Occasion, than the Words of the Text: *They saw much People, and were moved with Compassion towards them; because they were as Sheep not having a Shepherd*. The first *European* Inhabitants there, being private Adventurers, neither numerous, nor rich, nor certain of Success, nor unanimous in Belief, established in several Provinces no Form whatever of publick Worship and Instruction. Too many of them carried but little Sense of Christianity abroad with them: A great Part of the rest suffer'd it to wear out gradually: and their Children grew

^d Luk. x. 1, 2.

^e Matth. x. 6.

^f John x. 16.

grew of course to have yet less than they: till in some Countries there were scarce any Footsteps of it left, beyond the mere Name. No Teacher was known, no Religious Assembly held; the Lord's Day distinguished only by more general Dissoluteness; the Sacrament of Baptism not administered for near twenty Years together, nor that of the Lord's Supper for near sixty, amongst many thousands of People, who did not deny the Obligation of these Duties, but lived notwithstanding in a stupid Neglect of them. Such was the State of things in more of our Colonies than one: and where it was a little better, it was however lamentably bad. Some Persons appear very desirous of seeing, what sort of Creatures Men would be, without the Knowledge of God. Here a sufficient Trial was made of this: and it shewed to an unhappy Degree of Certainty, that they would be wicked, and dissolute, and brutal in every Respect, and return in a few Generations to entire Barbarism. Possibly, indeed, they might have been delivered from this Evil, by that of Popery; which always taking Advantage of Ignorance and Profaneness, had already begun to spread: and dreadful was the Alternative of one or the other. In these Circumstances the poor Inhabitants made, from all Parts, the most affecting Representations of their deplorable Condition: the Truth of which was but too fully confirmed by their respective Governors, and the Persons of principal Note in each Province.

Province. There could not be worthier Objects of Regard, than such Complainants. And if they who remained insensible did not deserve pity so much, they wanted it still more. The Society therefore, in Proportion to their own Ability, and the Need of each Place, first sent over Missionaries, to perform the Offices of Religion amongst them; then School-masters, to instruct their Children in the Principles of it: who, after *enduring much Contradiction of Sinners,*^g and going through a great Variety of Labours and Difficulties; have, through the Blessing of God, made a remarkable Change in the Face of Things, and laid a noble Ground-work, of what, we hope, will every Day be carrying on towards Perfection. But at present much remains to be done. Multitudes continue, as before, in a thoughtless Disregard to almost every Part of Christianity: and Multitudes also are daily petitioning for Help: which to some we cannot give at all; and to others so little, that they have Divine Service only once in many Weeks; and several Districts of sixty, seventy and eighty Miles long, have but one Minister to officiate in each of them.

The next Object of the Society's Concern, were the poor Negroes. These unhappy Wretches learn, in their Native Country, the grossest Idolatry, and the most savage Dispositions: and then are sold to the best Purchaser: sometimes by their Enemies,

^g Heb. xii. 3.

Enemies, who would else put them to Death; sometimes by their nearest Friends, who are either unable or unwilling to maintain them. Their Condition in our Colonies, though it cannot well be worse than it would have been at home, is yet nearly as hard as possible: their Servitude most laborious, their Punishments most severe. And thus many thousands of them spend their whole Days, one Generation after another, undergoing with reluctant Minds continual Toil in this World, and comforted with no Hopes of Reward in a better. For it is not to be expected, that Masters, too commonly negligent of Christianity themselves, will take much Pains to teach it their Slaves: whom even the better Part of them are in a great measure habituated to consider, as they do their Cattle, merely with a View to the Profit arising from them. Not a few therefore have openly opposed their Instruction, from an Imagination, now indeed proved and acknowledged to be groundless, that Baptism would entitle them to Freedom. Others, by obliging them to work on Sundays to provide themselves Necessaries, leave them neither Time to learn Religion in, nor any Prospect of being able to subsist, if once the Duty of resting on that Day become Part of their Belief. And some, it may be feared, have been averse to their becoming Christians, because, after that, no Pretence will remain for not treating them like Men. When these Obstacles are added to the Fondness
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they have for their old Heathenish Rites, and the strong Prejudices they must have against Teachers from among those, whom they serve so unwillingly; it cannot be wondered, if the Progress made in their Conversion prove but slow. After some Experience of this, Catechists were appointed in two Places, by way of Trial, for Their Instruction alone: whose Success, where it was least, hath not been inconsiderable; and so great in the Plantation belonging to the Society, that out of two hundred and thirty, at least seventy are now Believers in Christ. And there is lately an Improvement to this Scheme begun to be executed, by qualifying and employing young Negroes, prudently chosen, to teach their Countrymen: from which, in the Opinion of the best Judges, we may reasonably promise ourselves, that this miserable *People*, the Generality of whom have hitherto *sat in Darkness, will see great Light.*^h

There still remains another Branch of the Society's Care, the *Indians* bordering on our Settlements. These consist of various Nations, valuable for some of their Qualities, but immersed in the vilest Superstitions, and engaged in almost perpetual Wars against each other, which they prosecute with Barbarities unheard of amongst the rest of Mankind: implacable in their Resentments, when once provoked; boundless in their Intemperance, when they have Opportunities for it, and at such

^h Matth. iv. 16.

such Times mischievous in the highest Degree: impatient of Labour, to procure themselves the common Conveniencies of Life; inhumanely negligent of Persons in Years; and, if Accounts of such Things may be credited, not scrupling to kill and eat their nearest Relations, when the long Expeditions they make, for hunting or against Enemies, have reduced them to Straits. Now these poor Creatures also, diligent Endeavours have been used to enlighten and reclaim, on such Occasions, and by such Methods, as were least suspicious. For without due Precautions, Harm would be done, instead of Good, where natural Jealousy is so industriously fomented by an artful Neighbour. And after all Precautions, it cannot be an easy Work, to convert Nations, whose Manners are so uncultivated; whose Languages are so different, so hard to learn, and so little adapted to the Doctrines of Religion; with whom we scarce ever contract Affinities; and who seldom continue long enough in the same Place, to let any good Impressions fix into Habits. Yet notwithstanding these Difficulties, which frustrated formerly a very expensive Attempt, another hath been made of late; and, through the Blessing of God, hath so reformed and improved the Morals together with the Notions of one *Indian* Tribe,* that we cannot but hope the rest will be induced, by seeing their Happiness, to follow their Example.

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* *The Mohawks.*

You have now heard in brief the State of our Colonies, with respect to our Religion. And were the Prospect of farther Success much smaller than it is; yet our Rule would be, to do our Duty, and leave the Event to Heaven. Persons of unwilling or desponding Minds may easily find Arguments to prove every good Design unpromising, or even impracticable. But the natural Dictate of Piety and Virtue is, to try. And the express Command of our blessed Lord is, that *the Gospel be preached to every Creature*.ⁱ Nor is only the Offer of Instruction to Heathens, but the Continuance of it for ever amongst Christians, the Will of Him, who, as *he gave some, Apostles and Evangelists*; gave *some* also, *Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of his Body*.^k By endeavouring to our Power that these things be done; we shall pay Obedience to his Authority, and imitate his Example: we shall give a Proof to our own Hearts, that we are indeed his Disciples; and convince the World, that Zeal for Religion is not yet extinguished: we shall habituate ourselves to the most amiable of Virtues, Goodwill to Mankind in the most important of their Interests: we shall serve the Purposes of Providence; which have their Accomplishment, *whether Men will bear, or whether they will forbear*:^l and how much soever we may *labour in vain* with respect

ⁱ Mark xvi. 15. ^k Ephes. iv. 11, 12. ^l Exek. ii. 5.

respect to others; yet our Judgment will be with the Lord, and our Work with our God.^m

But the same God hath promised, that his Truth shall finally prevail upon Earth. And though we cannot say, at what Time or by what Degrees this Promise shall be fulfilled; yet we have room to hope, that every sincere Endeavour is all along contributing something towards its Completion. The good Seed, which appears to lie dead for a while, will spring up in its Season: That which seems to shoot weakly at first, will gain Strength insensibly, through the favourable Influences of Heaven; and *the Grain of Mustard-seed, become a Tree.*ⁿ Thus have these Colonies themselves grown: thus hath Christianity grown from its Beginning, both in other Places, and in them also: nor have we any reason to doubt its going on to do so still. In less than forty Years, under many Discouragements, and with an Income very disproportionate to the Vastness of the Undertaking, a great deal hath been done: though little notice may have been taken of it, by Persons unattentive to these things, or backward to acknowledge them. Near a hundred Churches have been built: above ten thousand Bibles and Common-Prayers, above a hundred thousand other pious Tracts distributed: great Multitudes, upon the whole, of Negroes and *Indians* brought over to the Christian Faith: many nume-

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^m Isai. xlix. 5.ⁿ Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

rous Congregations have been set up, which now support the Worship of God at their own Expence, where it was not known before : and seventy Persons are constantly employed, at the Expence of the Society, in the farther Service of the Gospel. All this, we grant, makes but a small Appearance, in a Tract of Land, extending sixteen hundred Miles. But it is an encouraging Specimen however, of what longer Time and more liberal Assistance may effect.

Both the Hopes and the Means of supporting Christianity amongst our own People there, are just the same as here at home. And though the Negroes and *Indians* are prejudiced against it, and but poorly qualified, in comparison, to judge of the Evidence of it ; yet they and all Men *have the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Consciences also bearing witness.*^o They may be convicted but too easily of transgressing evident Duties of Nature : and when once they see their need of Repentance and Pardon, they will gladly receive the Gospel of Christ, of which these two are the distinguishing Articles. It will appear in it self infinitely preferable to what they have believed hitherto. The Teachers of it will appear, both from their superior Knowledge and good Lives, worthy of Credit. The Professors of it around them, will bear a Testimony to it, in some respects the stronger, for their being often condemned by it.

^o Rom. ii. 15.

it. And if such Arguments do not amount, after all, to the highest Evidence, they afford however very rational Motives of Assent, especially to Persons capable of no farther Information: and were these Motives weaker than they are, yet the Grace of God producing by them so powerful an Effect on the Minds of Men, we undoubtedly approve ourselves, by proposing them, His Ministers for the Happiness of our Fellow-Creatures; and may justly be *confident, that he who hath begun a good Work in them, will perform it*^p perfectly.

But perhaps not our Success, but the Use and Benefit of it, will be called in question. Now of this, we apprehend, there is abundant Proof. The bare Profession and outward Appearance of such a Religion as the Christian is, if taught in any tolerable Purity, must have some right Influence: and the Body of a People cannot go the utmost Lengths in Wickedness, whilst that Appearance subsists. What Lengths they would go in time, if it were lost, as we have not experienced, we are not apt to consider. But a little Reflexion on the Number and Strength of human Passions, and the Abilities we have of finding Means to gratify them, would give us a high Value of whatever hath any peculiar Force to restrain them. The one Institution of a Day of holy Rest, is not only, under prudent Regulations, a great Refreshment to the Bulk of Mankind; but greatly tends to civilize them also,
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by uniting Neighbourhoods in formed Assemblies, to acknowledge their common Dependance on God, and Relation to each other, with Hearts disengaged from selfish Attentions, and open to friendly Regards. Nor is it possible, be they ever so negligent Hearers of publick Worship and Instruction, but considerable Impressions, at least general ones, must remain upon their Minds. And most evidently the Impressions of Religion dispose Men to every Thing productive of common Good: To Justice and Veracity and the Reverence of an Oath, without which the Intercourse of Man with Man is not a Moment safe: to Faithfulness, Duty and Love in the several Relations of Life, publick and private: to Mildness, Charity and Compassion in their whole Behaviour: to Sobriety and Industry, the Pillars of national Wealth and Greatness: and to that joyful Hope of a better World, which is our truest Direction, and firmest Support, in every Stage of our Journey through This. Many more Persons will be thus influenced in various Degrees, than are usually observed: for a regular, inoffensive Behaviour affords little Matter of Speculation and Discourse. And though still the Generality may be bad; yet, if left to themselves, they would certainly have been worse. Every body owns, that a wrong Belief hath great Power to deprave Men's Morals. Surely then a right one must have some Power to reform them. And if not so much as might be wished; this is no more an
Argument

Argument against the Usefulness of Religion, than of Reason: but a strong Argument, why Both should be cultivated to the utmost; and carefully applied to so important a Purpose. If our Colonies had not experienced great Evils from the Decay of Christianity amongst them; they would never have petitioned us so earnestly for Instruction in it, as they have done. And if they had not experienced great Good from the Restoration of it, that Earnestness would never have continued, as it doth, to this Day.

Nor will our Compliance with their Request be a Benefit only to Them, but to this Nation also. If They are dishonest and profligate; every single Person here, who hath Concerns with them, will be in Danger of suffering by it. If they consume their Wealth and their Time in Vices and Follies; their Trade will be gained over, from Them and Us, by our Rivals and Adversaries. And if the Ties of a Religion, binding Men so strongly to *be subject for Conscience Sake*,^a are loosened from off their Minds, which may some time or another need every Tie, that can keep them attached to us; it will much facilitate their becoming Adversaries themselves. And we shall well deserve their revolting from Us, if we take no care of their obeying God. But on the contrary, as Christian Principles will teach them Dutifulness and Loyalty; so receiving from hence the support of those Principles,

^a Rom. xiii. 5.

ciples, will recommend us to their Gratitude; hoping for the Continuance of that Support, will create some Dependance in point of Interest; and agreeing in the same Faith and Worship with us, will be an everlasting Motive to civil Unity also.

But another common Benefit of propagating Christianity in our Colonies is, that thus we shall hinder Corruptions of Christianity from prevailing there, and sharing with Profaneness a divided Empire over the Land. If no authorized Teachers are sent, some Inducement or another will raise voluntary ones from time to time: and very possibly the less reasonable their Doctrine is, the more it may be hearken'd to. For Sentiments of Religion, as for want of due Cultivation they quite wear out of some Minds; so in others they degenerate into Superstition or Enthusiasm. And accordingly many pernicious Errors, besides the above-mentioned capital one of Popery, took early Root in these Provinces; nor are they yet extirpated, perhaps in part newly revived: Some, dissolving the Obligations of moral Duties: Some, destroying the inward Peace of very pious and good Persons, and making Life gloomy and uncomfortable: Some, leading Men to ascribe every Folly or Wickedness that possesses the Fancy to Divine Inspiration: Some, inconsistent with our present happy Establishment: and others, destructive of the Safety of all Governments whatever, by forbidding to contribute any kind of Assistance to the publick Defence against Enemies:

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on which Notion the Representatives of the Province of *Pensylvania* have acted this last Summer.^r Now let it only be consider'd, how fatal a more general Belief of some of these Doctrines must have been there at present; indeed how very unhappy the Belief of any of them must be at all times; and the Importance of supporting Instructors in true

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^r See a printed Collection of Messages, Answers, Addresses, &c. the Substance of which is as follows. The Quakers, *having applied themselves with great Industry to obtain an uncommon Majority in the Assembly*, though they are not above one third of the People in Number, refused to make any Provision of Necessaries for the Troops to be raised in that Province, as being a thing repugnant to their Religious Principles, though his Majesty had notified under his Sign Manual, that he expected it from them. Soon after this they adjourned for above five Weeks; though the Governor made strong Instances to the contrary, setting forth, *That as the new Levies were in want of every thing, even Houses to cover their Heads, He was hourly apprehensive of their committing some Disorders.* And being called together again by him in about a Fortnight, instead of raising any Money, they made a Complaint, that many of their Servants had been inlisted; and demanded the Restitution of them. The Governor answer'd, that they might easily have prevented this Inconvenience, and might still easily remedy it, by Methods which he pointed out to them; that he had done what he could to relieve them, and would continue to do so; but that forcing out of his Majesty's Troops at once all the Servants in them, would be unreasonable and unjust, very detrimental to the Service, and very dangerous to the publick Peace. Yet notwithstanding these Representations, and though Mr. Penn one of their Proprietors, many Merchants and other Inhabitants of *Philadelphia*, and the Council of the Province, concurred with the Governor, and pressed them earnestly to answer his Majesty's Expectations, they came at length to this Resolution only: *That 3000 l. of their current Money be paid for the King's Use; provided that all the Servants inlisted in the Province, whom they had computed at 300, and valued at 10 l. each, be first returned to their respective Masters, free of all Charges; and such Assurances given, as three Persons, named in the Resolution, should think fitting, that the said Servants are returned, and that no Servants be inlisted for the future.* These being the Conditions on which the Money was given, it will not be wonder'd at, that when the last Advices came from thence, no Part of it had been paid.

Religion, were it only for a standing Guard against the worldly Inconveniences of false Religion, will evidently appear very great.

But let us now think, what Good must follow from extending this Instruction to the poor Negroes also. The Servitude and hard Labour they undergo, be it as justifiable as it can, surely requires, that we should make them all the Amends in our Power: and the Danger, into which they have brought our Colonies more than once, demands the greatest Care to compose and soften their vindictive and sullen Spirits. Now there can be nothing contrived on Purpose, more likely to effect this, than Belief of the Gospel: which not only forbids in general, both doing and *recompensing Evil*;^s but commands in particular *as many as are Servants under the Yoke, to count their Masters worthy of all Honour,*^t *and be subject to them with all Fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward; for this is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conscience towards God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully:*^u *to do Service with good Will, as to the Lord, and not to Men; knowing that whatever good any Man doth, the same he shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*^w The Tendency of such Doctrine must be, to make their Tempers milder, and their Lives happier. And no Imagination

^s Rom. xii. 17.

^t 1 Tim. vi. 1.

^u 1 Peter ii. 18, 19.

^w Ephes. vi. 7, 8.

nation can be suggested to them, of any worldly Exemptions or Privileges arising from their Profession of it. For as human Authority hath granted them none, so the Scripture, far from making any Alteration in Civil Rights, expressly directs, that *every Man abide in the Condition wherein he is called*, with great Indifference of Mind concerning outward Circumstances:^{*} and the only Rule it prescribes for Servants of the same Religion with their Masters, is, *not to despise them because they are Brethren; but do them Service the rather.*[†] Nor hath Experience at all shewn the Behaviour of such, in the present Case, to be different from what Reason would lead us to expect. On the contrary, in a great Rebellion of the Negroes at *New York*, only two of those who had received any Instruction, and only one who had been baptized, was so much as suspected of being guilty; and he was afterwards acknowledged to be innocent: but the deepest in the Conspiracy were the Slaves of those Persons, who had opposed the most warmly all Endeavours for their Conversion. It may therefore be depended on, that Success in these Endeavours will both be a Security, and every Way an Advantage, to their Proprietors. And if it doth procure the poor Wretches themselves a little more kind Usage, they will then be fitter to receive it: and at present, as much as can be safely allowed them, is but their due. The Apostle's Injunction

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^{*} 1 Cor. vii. 20—24.[†] 1 Tim. vi. 2.

was made not only for Slaves, but for Heathen Slaves: *Masters, give to your Servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven:*² *neither is there respect of Persons with him.*³ And if their becoming Christians will help, as it certainly will, to obtain them such Treatment; putting together their Condition and their Numbers, there are but few Things, which, even on that Account, common Humanity more obliges us to attempt.

Then as to the Influence of Christianity on the *Indians*: it must undoubtedly restrain their mutual Barbarities, which it doth not appear what else will, and dispose them to a settled and orderly Life. By means of this, they will come to enjoy the Benefit of Agriculture, and of all the Arts that are useful in Society: they will of consequence grow happier and more numerous: and as they will become at the same Time more harmless too; it would be both an immoral and a false Policy, to envy them these Advantages. They have yielded up to us a considerable Part of their Country: and it is but common Gratitude, to shew them the Way of living comfortably in the rest. We have introduced amongst them both Diseases and Vices, which have destroyed great Numbers of them: Surely it is fit we should communicate something good to them. It may be feared they are hitherto the worse for their Knowledge of Us: but they will

² Col. iv. 1. ³ Ephes. vi. 9.

will certainly be the better for the Knowledge of our Religion. And the more they are prejudiced against it by the Wickedness of its Professors, the more need there is to lay before them in a full Light the Excellency of its Precepts: and to convince them, that there are Persons, who not only believe, but practise them. Nor should it be forgotten, that every single *Indian*, whom we make a Christian, we make a Friend and Ally at the same Time; both against the remaining Heathen, and a much more dangerous Neighbour, from whose Instigations almost all that we have suffered by them is allowed to have come.

But the temporal Advantages of propagating Christianity are infinitely the least. If we allow but the Truth of natural Religion, we must admit the future, as well as present, Happiness of Mankind to depend on preserving and diffusing the Knowledge of that Religion. And there is neither Instance nor Prospect of either of these Things being attempted by any other Method, than that of preaching the Gospel: of which the Doctrines and Duties of Nature make so large a Part. If therefore it be of Importance, that the People in our Colonies should worship the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and believe Virtue to be his Law; that the *Negroes* and *Indians* should *be turned from Idols, to serve the living and true God*;^b and that all should know, there will be a Recompence
hereafter

^b 1 Theff. i. 9.

hereafter to the Just and to the Unjust: whoever deserves the Name of Deist in a good Sense, whoever is indeed an Enemy to Superstition, and a Friend to Mankind, will rejoice to have that Faith carefully taught amongst them, by which alone they will learn these momentous Truths; to have it *told among the Heathen, that the Lord is King, and that he shall judge the People righteously.*^c

But if *the Gospel of Christ*, besides comprehending the System of Natural Religion, be, by virtue of its own peculiar Doctrines, *the Power of God unto Salvation:*^d then every possible Motive concurs, for being zealous in spreading it throughout the Earth. Revelation indeed neither obliges nor permits us to pass a hard Sentence on those, who have never had it proposed with sufficient Evidence. *To their own Master they stand or fall:*^e and of them only, *to whom much is given, shall much be required.*^f For if there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not.^{ff} But still, as *all Men have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God,*^g and there is but one Name under Heaven whereby they can be saved; as Christianity is inexpressibly more efficacious for the Restoration of Mankind, than unassisted Reason; as our only Assurance, either of receiving a future Reward or escaping

^c Psal. xcvi. 10.^d Rom. i. 16.^e Rom. iv. 14.^f Luke xii. 48.^{ff} 2 Cor. viii. 12.^g Rom. iii. 23.

escaping future Punishment, must arise from Scripture; and we have no Intimation in it, of any Person's enjoying that *Life and Immortality, which Jesus Christ hath brought to Light*,^h but such as believe in him: these Considerations, without limiting at all the free Mercies of God, cannot but shew us the great Superiority of our own Condition, and make us ask, with great Sollicitude concerning others: *How then shall they believe in Him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a Preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?*ⁱ Our blessed Lord hath intrusted his Followers, to preserve his Gospel in Purity, where it is; and communicate it, where it is not. By their faithful Discharge of these Duties formerly, we ourselves were *deliver'd from the Bondage of Heathenism into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*.^k It now belongs to Us, in our Turn, to *strengthen our Brethren*,^l and *call them that are afar off*:^m and where shall we find properer Objects of our Care and Zeal?

Perhaps it will be said, They ought to maintain their own Teachers. But this cannot be expected from the Heathen, who are insensible of their Want of them: nor from those of our own People, who are too like Heathen, and have not the Sense of it which they ought. Such as have, do maintain

^h 2 Tim. i. 10.ⁱ Rom. x. 14, 15.^k Rom. viii. 21.^l Luke xxii. 32.^m Acts ii. 39.

tain their Teachers, where they are able. For there are very indigent Parts, as well as very opulent. Some whole Provinces have no Assistance at all from us. And in most Places we are only joint Contributors. As soon as ever there is Room for it, they will be left to build by themselves on the Foundation laid: and the Society will go on to new Work. Enquiries are constantly made, what each Congregation can do: and Missionaries have been with-drawn, till they will do it. For we are not only desirous, but under a Necessity, of being as frugal as possible, by the daily Increase of Petitions for Help.

But some will object farther, that all the Assistance we can give Christianity, is too much wanted in our own Country, to admit of any Schemes for propagating it in foreign ones. And would to God these Persons would ask themselves, whether they are indeed desirous of removing the Objection they make; or only argue against this and that Way of doing Good, to save the Expence of doing it in any Way. A true and judicious Zeal will carefully avoid raising an Opposition between two Charities; which is a much surer Method of hurting the One, than serving the Other: whereas with this Precaution, a first scarce ever suffers considerably, if at all, by setting up a second; but Men's Hearts are engaged to contribute to Both. Every single Member of the *Society for promoting Christian Knowledge* at home, was originally incorpo-

corporated into Ours for spreading it abroad. That Society is at this Day promoting the same Knowledge in the East, as well as here; whilst We are doing it in the West. Many of us belong to Both: and promise ourselves a larger Share of the Blessing of God in Each, for neglecting Neither. In these Nations great Provision is made already, and greater we hope will daily be made, for offering Salvation to Mankind. They who will reject it after all, must do so, and take the Consequences. But let Us, *in nothing terrified by our Adversaries, strive together for the Faith of the Gospel:*ⁿ and not only sustain a Defensive War, but shew, that attacking the Dominions of our Lord and Master shall increase our Zeal to extend them. Our Colonies receive from hence a great deal of what is bad. We send them our Malefactors: we send them our immoral and irreligious Customs: we send them our infidel and profligate Books. Surely we ought to do some Good, where we do so much Harm. And consider, To whom is it done? To our Countrymen, and Fellow-Subjects: distant indeed from us in Situation, but closely connected by the strongest Ties. To Them; to their Servants and Neighbours it is, that we are imparting Happiness; and possibly securing it to ourselves or our Posterity there, if God should permit us at home to suffer what we deserve.

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ⁿ Phil. i. 27, 28.

Now this unquestionably right Design cannot be carried on, but under the Direction of a regular Society. For without it, small Benefactions could not be applied at all: and large ones must be applied separately, to great Disadvantage: no uniform Influence could be preserved, no settled Information had; nor any of that Experience gained, which results from long and extensive Acquaintance with the State of Things. What sort of Persons they are who compose this Society, will appear from the printed List. None of them receive any temporal Advantage from being Members of it. They are all obliged to subscribe a yearly Contribution to the good Work they undertake. A considerable Number of the Chief of them constantly attend upon it. And they will admit with Pleasure every serious Christian, who offers himself, and is qualified to assist in it. Their standing Rules are publicly known, allowed to be good, and faithfully observed. They give the World a yearly Account of their Success, with an Abstract of their Receipts and Disbursements. They deliver yearly the Particulars of them to the Lord Chancellor and two chief Justices. And they have proceeded from the Beginning to this Day with great Unanimity in all their Affairs.

It hath been pretended indeed, that immoral and negligent Men are employed as Missionaries. And to say that this hath never once happen'd, would be going too far. But that it hath frequently happen'd,

pen'd, or ever for want of due Care, is utterly false. Strict Examination is made at first into the Characters of all that are offer'd; strict Enquiry into their Behaviour afterwards: and exact Accounts required from them twice a Year, of what Duty they do, and what Progress they make. The most earnest Requests, the most solemn Adjurations are sent, that all who can, would give any useful Intelligence relating to them: and great Regard is always paid to such Intelligence: yet very few Complaints are brought in, either from good Will or bad. Too many, it must be owned, of desperate Fortunes and Characters, who are or pretend to be in holy Orders, transport themselves into *America*, and behave there as it may be expected they will. But we have no Concern with any, whose Names are not seen in the publick List of Persons receiving Salaries from us. And the larger the Number is of vicious Clergymen, who go thither of their own Accord; the more is the need of sending as many worthy ones as possible, to correct their Influence.

Were there Room indeed for making larger Allowances, more Persons of great Abilities might be had. Were there better Opportunities for a learned Education abroad, more of the Natives of our Colonies would be fitted for the Work: which they would undertake with many Advantages above such as go from hence. And had they Bishops there, these Persons might be ordained

without the Inconveniencies of a long Voyage: Vacancies might be supplied in much less Time: the primitive and most useful Appointment of Confirmation might be restored; and an orderly Discipline exercised in the Churches. Nor would such an Establishment encroach at all on the present Rights of the Civil Government in our Colonies; or bring their Dependence into any Degree of that Danger, which some Persons profess to apprehend so strongly on this Occasion, who would make no manner of Scruple about doing other Things much more likely to destroy it: who are not terrified in the least, that such Numbers there reject the Episcopal Order entirely: nor perhaps would be greatly alarmed, were ever so many to reject Religion itself: though evidently in Proportion as either is thrown off, all Dependence produced by it ceases of Course. To this equally pious and harmless Design, two great Prelates,* now deceased, gave a thousand Pounds each: and a Lady, incomparably more eminent for her Virtues, than her Quality, † bequeathed the Sum of five hundred Pounds last Year to the same Purpose: which God incline the Hearts of all, in whose Power it is, to promote as it deserves! But in the mean time, let it not be imagined, that the Difficulties we labour under are too heavy to be overcome.

* Archbishop *Tenison*, and Sir *Jonathan Trelawney*, Bishop of *Winchester*.

† Lady *Elizabeth Hastings*.

come. Difficulties are Arguments for nothing, but more Zeal and more Liberality. For if we stop, till we have every Thing that might be wished, When shall we go on?

Another Objection to the Conduct of the Society is, that they have sent Missionaries to some Places, in which there were already Christian Assemblies established and supported. But in one Sort of these Assemblies, there is no Christian Ministry, no Celebration of the Sacraments of the Gospel. In another, Infants are denied the Sacrament of Baptism. And in the least exceptionable, there are several Things, which the Consciences of many, we apprehend with great Reason, cannot acquiesce in; who were not therefore to be left destitute of publick Worship: especially as our Charter was granted, in express Terms, for *the Maintenance of an Orthodox Clergy in those Parts*. And the Members of this Church, I am sorry to say it, lying under peculiar Burdens in one considerable Province, * which other Professors of Christianity do not, though equally Dissenters from the Majority there; they seem of Right entitled to some peculiar Assistance in return. We have obtruded
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* In *New England* They are rated to the Support of what the *Independents*, who are the greater Part of that People, call, though without Right, the Established Church. And the Goods of many have been seized, or their Bodies imprisoned, for Non-payment. The *Anabaptists*, on their Petition, were exempted from paying this Rate; and the *Quakers*, without petitioning: but the Petition of the Members of our Church was rejected.

the Service of the Church of *England* no where: we have settled no Clergyman any where, without the Inhabitants requesting it, and contributing to it: we have sent no Successor upon a Vacancy, without their renewing that Request. But if the Provision, which we have made for the People of our own Communion, hath proved instrumental at the same Time to bring others over into it: we hope there is very far from being any Harm done. Indeed Unity of Profession amongst ourselves, effected by Methods of Peace and Charity, will greatly recommend our Religion to the Infidels: who else may be tempted to continue as they are, for want of knowing with whom to join.

We acknowledge it, whoever is taught Christianity by our Care, will be taught it as professed in the Church established here by Law. There can be no Teaching at all, but in some particular Form. We think our own the best. Every body thinks it far from the worst. At least our Converts will have the Bible put into their Hands, to judge for Themselves. And Which is righter, that Heathens and Persons of no Religion should continue what they are, or become what we would make them? The Society we are engaged in, is the only one for this Purpose. And were it now to be erected, instead of having subsisted so long: not a single Step could be taken on any other footing than this; that the smaller Part of those who wished well to it, must be concluded by the greater.

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So good a Design therefore being so properly executed; the Expences, which must attend it, ought to be supplied. *The Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.*^o And there is the same Reason, the same Necessity indeed, that the Missionaries in *America* should have due Provision made for them, as that the Apostles should at first, or the Ministers of our Parishes now. And if Persons of Character, being at Liberty, as they are, to exercise their Function elsewhere, are willing to undertake such an Employment as this, at such a Distance, on so small an Allowance as they receive from the Society: they ought surely to have it raised for them very chearfully, and *be counted worthy of double Honour,*^p in the Sense of Recompence as well as Esteem, if it could be paid them.

But perhaps it will be said, Supporting Designs of this Nature is the Clergy's Business: let Them take care of it. And so, God be thanked, we do: and so, I hope in God, we shall, whether we are helped in it more or less; in such manner, as both to keep pace with the Willing, and make amends for the Unwilling. We desire not to boast, and we need not to be ashamed, of the Proportion which we contribute. But we may notwithstanding do very well to increase it. For there is so much expected of us, and we are so greatly concerned to answer every reasonable Expectation to
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^o 1 Cor. ix. 14.^p 1 Tim. v. 17.

the utmost; that if any of our Order have omitted taking sufficient Notice of a Charity so immediately related to their Profession, it is their Duty on many Accounts, to make full Compensation to it without Delay. It is indeed our Duty, on every Occasion, at all Times, but especially in an Age when no Part of our Conduct will be interpreted favourably, to avoid all Appearance, either of preferring *Riches in this World* before being *rich in good Works*,^a or of *loving Pleasures more than God*.^b St. Paul took Wages of some Churches to do others Service.^c Let Us, out of the Wages which We take, do all the Service we can to the Church of God; and *distribute largely to the Necessities of the Saints*,^d particularly their spiritual ones.

But is the Support of this Design incumbent on the Clergy alone? Did not the Laity originally maintain the Apostles in their Travels? And ought they not still to be equally zealous, *that the Word of the Lord may have free Course, and be glorified*?^e Do they not know, how very inconsiderable the Benefices of far the greatest Part of the Clergy are; what Hospitality is required of the rest of us; and how large Demands are continually made upon us for Charities of various Kinds: to the Poor of our Parishes and Neighbourhoods, of our Brethren, their Widows and Orphans; to every pious and compassionate Use, publick or private? And are they

^a 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.^b Rom. xii. 13.^c 2 Tim. iii. 4.^d 2 Theff. iii. 1.^e 2 Cor. xi. 8.

they not sensible also, that were We ever so deficient, this excuses not Them : that every Man's Duty is, not to guard against doing more Good than comes to his Share, but to do willingly what he can ; and that each one's Reward shall be in Proportion to his Work ?

Whoever therefore finds himself disposed to make Objections, let him examine, what is at the bottom of them : Whether it be not really Disregard to Religion, or Want of Humanity ; some groundless Prejudice, or some wrong Attachment to Self-Interest or Self-Gratification. If so, let him first plant the Gospel in his own Heart : and all his Pleas against contributing to the Propagation of it, will soon vanish.

Every Man's Charities indeed ought to be left to his own Choice. But so many, even of those who are bountiful in other Ways, neglect pious Uses almost entirely, that good Persons have both Opportunity and Reason for allotting to These a large Proportion of their Beneficence. And amongst these, as That now under Consideration is of too extensive a Nature to be thoroughly comprehended by every one, and at too great a Distance to make any strong Impression on the Generality of the World ; they who do form just Conceptions of it, should, in proportion to the Smallness of their Number, be the more liberal to it : as in truth there is need. The only certain Income we have, is a Trifle : not sixty Pounds a Year. The volun-

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tary Subscriptions, though they are ten times greater, are not a fifth Part of the annual Expence. Hitherto therefore almost all hath depended on occasional Gifts: which, after sinking much lower than they were formerly, for some few Years increased again. On this Encouragement, the Society, importuned continually for new Missionaries, with an Earnestness which nothing but Necessity could justify resisting, made a great Addition to their Number. And had the Contributions of this last Year risen much above the preceding ones, it had been but too easy to have disposed of them all. But on the contrary, though one noble Benefaction, of a thousand Pounds, hath been given, † to be employed for the Conversion of the Negros; yet those to the other Parts of our Design have fallen very short: and a heavy Debt hath been of consequence incurred. This may possibly reduce us to ask Assistance, in a Method, which, though authorized, we have seldom made use of: being desirous that *he who sheweth Mercy*, might appear to do it *with Chearfulness*,^w and not constrained by Sollicitations. But in whatever manner Application is made to Persons, we trust the same God, who hath provided for us wonderfully thus long, will now also dispose their Hearts to consider, that on Them it depends, whether such a Design, so far advanced, through so many Difficulties,

† By Mr. Batt of Hampshire.

^w Rom. xii. 8.

culties, shall be carried on still, and gain ground continually, as it easily may; or whether it shall fall back, and sink into Nothing, with very little Hope of being ever revived: That he will move wise Men to think, what the publick Interest requires of them; and benevolent Persons, to regard the private Happiness of their Fellow-Creatures: true Christians, to support and enlarge the Kingdom of their Master with Zeal; true Protestants, to silence effectually the Boasts and Reproaches of the *Romanists* on this Head; and all true Friends of our Religious Establishment, to endeavour, that it may gain as honourable a Pre-eminence as possible, over the rest of the Reformed Churches, in so good a Work.

Persons in plentiful Circumstances, and perhaps at a loss for Ways in which they may give Alms, will here find one undoubtedly proper Way. And Persons in Arrear to Religion and Charity, have an excellent Opportunity offer'd them, of paying the Debt. They who plead the multitude of other Expences, might, a very great Part of them, by withdrawing but a little of what they ought from their Luxury and Vanity, qualify themselves for Liberalities, which will turn hereafter to a much better Account. And such as make the Increase of Taxes their Excuse, ought to consider, that as Providence hath brought that Increase upon us, by permitting us to suffer so much from our Enemies, in that Part of the World, where we have done so

little for God; espousing His Cause is the likeliest Method of deriving a Blessing on our Own: and if we neglect it, whatever may befall us there, we must impute to ourselves. We enjoy very great Advantages from thence: the Government, large Revenues; the Nation in general, a most beneficial Trade; every one of us, something or another, useful or agreeable in Life. It is therefore our common Concern, both to do Good where we have received it; and to do it in such manner, as may best secure our continuing to receive it. But they more especially, who are now raising Fortunes by Commerce with our *American* Settlements, or who possess acquired or hereditary Estates, of which that Commerce laid the Foundation, they should think often, how much hath accrued to them from the Produce of these Colonies, the Country of these *Indians*, the Labour of these *Negros*; and reflect very seriously, what Returns, possibly Justice, at least Gratitude, and in many Cases Prudence also, as well as Piety, direct them to make.

Some perhaps may approve one Part of this Undertaking beyond the rest: and whatever they give, will be applied, if they desire it, to that alone. Some may be unwilling to let their Benefactions appear: and such may with Ease transmit them privately: the Donation will be acknowledged, the Donor unknown. But though Charity given in secret, from a Principle of Humanity, be laudable in the highest Degree; yet when the Motive is
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Fear of Ridicule or Censure from a profane Age, this argues a Weakness of Mind, very dangerous to those who are influenced by it, and very prejudicial to Religion : which cannot have a more seasonable Service done it, than if all Persons indeed, especially of Rank and Influence, who inwardly wish well to it, would openly patronize the several Designs formed to promote it.

The Design now before us, both deserves and requires a general Co-operation, to produce its complete Effect : That they who are able, should contribute to it, in proportion to their Ability ; and they who are not, speak well of it, and pray for it : that we of the Society should be vigilant and active, prudent and impartial in our Administration : that Persons in Authority abroad should countenance and protect the Work ; for in their Power it is, to forward or obstruct it very greatly : that the People in general there, should not only be willing to let all under them and around them *partake of the Grace of Life,*^x but earnestly invite them to it, *with Meekness of Wisdom,* and by the most prevalent of Arguments, *a good Conversation.*^y But beyond the rest it is necessary for every one concerned in the immediate Execution of the Design, always to remember, that bad as it is in other Teachers of the Gospel to behave in a manner unworthy of their Profession, it will be yet worse in Them, if they take an uncommon Character upon

^x 1 Pet. iii. 7.

^y James iii. 13.

on themselves, only to dishonour it; and *compass Sea and Land,*^z with no other Effect, than to make *God's Name be blasphemed amongst the Gentiles:*^a that They ought with peculiar Diligence to follow *Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace;*^b holding fast the faithful Word, as they have been taught, that they may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gainsayers;^c that they ought to be instant, in season, out of season; to watch, endure Afflictions, and make full Proof of their Ministry,^d shewing themselves in all things Patterns of good Works.^e

These then are our several Duties: and great will be our Reward for performing them. Let us all therefore, each in his Station, *arise and be doing: and the Lord be with us.*^f

^z Matth. xxiii. 15.^a Rom. ii. 24.^b 2 Tim. ii. 22.^c Tit. i. 9.^d 2 Tim. iv. 2, 5.^e Tit. ii. 7.^f 1 Chr. xxii. 16.

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